

SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE NEWS SUNDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2017

Good morning and welcome to the weekly news bulletin of the South African Radio League read by [your name, call sign and QTH]

You may tune in to the South African Radio League news bulletin on Sunday mornings, at 08:15 Local Time in Afrikaans and at 08:30 Local Time in English, on HF as well as on many VHF and UHF repeaters around our country. Echolink listeners may connect to ZS0JPL for a relay.

This audio bulletin may be downloaded from the League website at www.sarl.org.za where you will find this as well as previous bulletins in text format under the news link on the left-hand side of the web page. While you are there, you may sign up to receive future bulletins by e-mail.

IN THE NEWS TODAY:

SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE NATIONAL FIELD DAY

BACKSCATTER SIGNALS FROM ACROSS THE ATLANTIC ON 144 MHZ

AMATEUR TELEVISION (ATV) STARTING IN CAPE TOWN

HAMNET EASTERN CAPE IS AT IT AGAIN

AWA CW ACTIVITY DAY THIS AFTERNOON

2017 BEACON BUILD-A-THON

HF PROPAGATION REPORT

and

UPCOMING EVENTS

** The South African Radio League National Field Day is on the air from 10:00 UTC on Saturday 11 February to 10:00 UTC on Sunday 12 February 2017. The aim is to work as many stations as possible on all the HF amateur bands (excluding the 2 200, 630, 60, 30, 17 and 12 m bands) using phone, CW, PSK31 and/or RTTY. The exchange is the number of transmitters, the Field Day operating class and your Provincial abbreviation. A RS or RST report is not required.

You and/or your Club can participate as Class A - Field Station, Multi operator, Class B - Field Station, Multi operator, QRP, Class C - Field Station, Single Operator, Class D - Field Station, Single Operator, QRP, Class E - Ultra Light Portable or if you are not allowed out then as Class F- General Stations.

Logs, in ADIF, Cabrillo or MS Excel format and labelled "your call sign NFD," shall be sent by e-mail to zs4bfm@mweb.co.za by 19 February 2017. A photo(s) of the station in operation (JPG format) MUST accompany every log entry.

Check the 2017 SARL Blue Book for the rules of the AWA CW Activity Day as well as the SARL National Field Day.

** Two companies, RS Components and Trax Interconnect, have made major contributions to AMSAT SA's Kletsious CubeSat. RS Components have supplied components for the next generation Electronic Power Supply system (EPS) and the controller board. Trax Interconnect supplied the PC Boards for the EPS, the controller board and the magnetic stabilisation system. Their support for amateur radio and amateur radio satellites is much appreciated.

** Pieter V51PJ at Rosh Pinah was running skeds with Marcos PY1MHZ in Brazil on 144 MHz JT65b, when he was alerted by Bernie ZS4TX that he could see Pieter's signal at -28 dB on the Moon. The Moon was at the time very low down on the western horizon in Namibia, and Pieter was beaming at 259 degrees. Later after the Moon had set, Bernie reported that he could still see Pieter's JT65b signal on the waterfall, which appears to be more than 900 km behind him across the Atlantic. When Meteor bursts occurred, Bernie recorded a Doppler shift around 200 Hertz off frequency, and when he changed polarization from horizontal to vertical the signals were weaker and did not decode.

Many years ago, Professor J.A. Gledhill and his team at Rhodes University discovered strong Sporadic-E propagation near the South Atlantic Anomaly at night. So one could infer that the medium, which produced the above backscatter on VHF, might have been caused by Sporadic-E clouds over the Atlantic Ocean. It could be worthwhile to investigate this phenomenon further, such as finding the direction where the reflected VHF signals peaked.

** Raoul Coetzee ZS1C announced that he is currently running ATV on 1265 MHz FM, about 4 Watts into a log periodic antenna with about 9 dB gain. He can aim it in any direction of anybody interested to do a test, and is located in Kraaifontein and is beaming in the direction of Bellville and Brackenfell.

Raoul says that you can use an old FM analogue satellite receiver, simply connect an antenna and tune. These receivers are not very sensitive on their own, so he is looking at a suitable preamplifier with a bandpass filter for 1,26 GHz. He is running a 4 MHz bandwidth, so any bandwidth setting seems to work on the receiver. If you see his call sign on a piece of wood, you found it!

The transmitter is a modified SM data transmitter, and he is only using a small portion of its intended use. There is no sound yet as he needs to build a 6 MHz oscillator, FM it and inject it with the composite video into the main VCO in order for the satellite receiver to receive the audio too. He would like to thank Leon Korkie, ZS1MM, for the transmitter and information on how to modify it.

** According to Hennie Coetzer, ZS2HC, the Hamnet members, with the assistance of the Border Radio Club, once again supplied communications for the IronMan 70.3 in East London. Sunday 29th January saw the 10th edition of this race and a bumper field of athletes.

Anthony ZS2BQ and Ivan ZS2ILN operated the VOC with the assistance of Alistair ZS2AB, Andrew ZS2EL, Hennie ZS2HC, Nick ZS2NB, and Phil ZS2NP. Garth ZS2AAR manned the cross band repeater providing coverage for those

not in reach of the town repeater. Adequate coverage of the event was made possible by the team who handled both logistical and emergency traffic for the event. A big thank you to all involved.

The East Londoners are not resting though - they are already preparing for the Surfers Marathon on the 18th February where they will once again be out flying the flag of amateur radio.

In Port Elizabeth, things have been happening as well. On Sunday 29th January, Andrew Gray was on the beach at Sardinia bay when there was a report of a possible drowning. Andrew contacted the Hamnet group and several members arrived to assist with the search. The Hamnet members offered spotters with communication between themselves on the emergency simplex frequency of 145.225. NSRI, Coastal water rescue, and paramedics were also on the scene.

The body was later spotted by helicopter and the search called off. Thank you to those who responded.

PEARS and Hamnet Eastern Cape are also getting ready for a bumper season with the Herald Mountain bike race on the 19th February followed a week later by the road race.

A new event on the horizon for these outdoor enthusiasts is the Addo Extreme 100 Mile (160Km) trail run. The event takes place over the weekend of 10-12 March in the mountains around Addo and Kirkwood. The terrain poses significant challenges - not only to competitors, but to the radio hams too. Not only as far as communications are concerned, but simply "getting there" will also be a challenge. The radio hams will need to set-up camps in some very remote areas, but this is why they do what they do!

** This afternoon from 13:00 - 15:00 UTC, you can participate in the Antique Wireless Association CW Activity Day. The aim of the AWA CW Activity Day is for participants to contact as many amateurs as possible on the 20, 40 and 80 m amateur bands. The exchange is a RST report, your name and your grid locator. You can take part as a single operator all band, low power, a single operator all band, QRP, a single operator single band, low power or a single operator single band, QRP. Log sheets must be submitted by Monday 20 February 2017 to andyzs6ady@vodamail.co.za.

** Leon, ZR6LU, reports, "There is a group of active amateurs who have all built their own beacons successfully and are all actively beaconing around the country and the world. The record is currently somewhere around 19 000 km on 200 mW or something of that order.

The beacons were constructed mostly under my supervision, although some guys were winding better toroids than I wind and making much better Perspex cases anyway.

The demonstration beacon is currently hosted in Cape Town and anyone can apply to host it for a while. Current plans are to move it to Port Elizabeth next

and then maybe to Kwazulu-Natal. It is small, the size of a thick paperback.

We want to repeat the success of last year's Build-A-Thon and have thus organised the 2017 Beacon Workshop for 11 March 2017 with even more and better inputs from the guys who have all done it already. There will be about an hour of discussions in the morning, followed by hands-on melting of solder and bending of wires!

There are still a few kits available for sale to the more technical amateurs, as well as completed kits that were constructed by fellow amateurs ready to go.

Contact me on 082 573 5580 for more information."

** Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that the solar activity is expected to be at low levels. There are a few sunspots visible but none are actively flaring.

If you want to do your own frequency predictions, the expected effective sunspot number for the week will be around 3.

The 15 to 30m bands will provide lots of DX fun.

Please visit the website spaceweather.sansa.org.za for further information.

** Let's look at some upcoming events:

5 February AWA CW Activity 11 12 February SARL National Field Day
18 February SARL Youth Sprint 18 February SDR Workshop 25 February
West Rand ARC Flea Market 26 February SARL Digital Contest 4 March
CTARC Bumper Flea Market 5 March SARL Hamnet 40m Contest

** To conclude our bulletin a quick overview of our main news item: The South African Radio League National Field Day is on the air from 10:00 UTC on Saturday 11 February to 10:00 UTC on Sunday 12 February 2017. The aim is to work as many stations as possible on all the HF amateur bands (excluding the 2 200, 630, 60, 30, 17 and 12 m bands) using phone, CW, PSK31 and/or RTTY.

And that brings us to the end of this bulletin

Clubs and individuals are invited to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners, if possible, in both English and Afrikaans, by following the news inbox link on the South African Radio League web page. News items for inclusion in the bulletin should reach the news team no later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

You are welcome to join us every Sunday morning for the weekly amateur radio magazine programme 'Amateur Radio Today' at 10:00 Central African Time. The programme can be heard on VHF and UHF repeaters countrywide and on 7 082 kHz lower side-band and on 7 205 kHz and 17 760 kHz AM. There is also a pod cast available from Dick Stratford, ZS6RO. A rebroadcast can be heard on Monday evenings at 18:30 Central African Time on 3 230 kHz AM.

We welcome your signal reports, comments and suggestions; please send these by e-mail to artoday@sarl.org.za. Sentech sponsors the radio transmissions on the non-amateur frequencies.

You have listened to a news bulletin compiled by Emile Venter, ZS6V, and read by

From the news team, best wishes for the week ahead.

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